

Honorable Judge Engelmayer,

My name is Richard Laugel and I am scheduled to appear before you for sentencing within the next month. It is with great sadness, remorse and embarrassment that I am sending you this letter today. I would like to start out by saying that I take full responsibility for the actions that ultimately resulted in me standing before you. Just a few short years ago, I never would have thought that I would one day find myself in such a predicament. The actions that brought me here were completely out of character for me. My unacceptable and reckless behavior not only resulted in my incarceration, but also in the loss of my home, my business, my marriage, my family, and my savings, as well as the chance for me to say goodbye to several close family members that passed away during my incarceration. Unfortunately I no longer have anyone that will support me in the courtroom on the day of my sentencing. When the time eventually comes for me to leave prison, I will be starting my life over again with nothing. This is something that I did not consider prior to committing the criminal acts that put me in this position.

During the past 3 years of my detention I have had a lot of time to reflect on my negative behavior. While I have no valid excuses for my criminal activity, I do believe that some of my actions were potentially influenced by a P.T.S.D. condition that I have been diagnosed with after serving multiple tours fighting in Iraq. To be clear, I am not looking for your pity or sympathy or any special treatment because of my military service, however I would like to explore the circumstances that possibly negatively influenced or led me to the commission of my crimes.


Prior to this I have never previously been in serious trouble or exhibited any type of violent behavior, however when I returned home from Iraq I found myself in a dark place. I constantly struggled with survivors guilt, social isolation, rage, aggression and nightmares among other things. During my time in the Marines I received absolutely no instruction on how to negotiate a peaceful resolution with anyone. As Marines we were trained to use only violence and aggression to solve problems. I greatly underestimated the impact that this would eventually have on the rest of my life. After the military, I refused to acknowledge the many P.T.S.D. symptoms that I displayed and instead chose to combat my problems using both drugs and alcohol as a crutch. I routinely had mental breakdowns and often attempted to use military skills and tactics to solve any problems or issues that occurred in my civilian life. I kept a small cache of weapons at my house because fighting in the war overseas has left me with a constant uneasy feeling of always having to be on guard. In March of 2016, I placed a small improvised explosive device underneath Anthony Guererro's vehicle after he brandished a firearm and threatened the lives of both me and my family. I believe that the stress, anger and adrenaline that I felt from Mr. Guererro threatening my family and I with a gun, along with the years of rage, negative emotions and aggression that I had kept bottled up inside me from the war, created a negative situation that caused me to act in a manner that I normally would not, and do things without rationally thinking them through. The explosive device I used was small enough that I reasonably believed it would do nothing more than scare and intimidate Mr. Guererro in order to "teach him a lesson". Despite the fact that I used extremely poor judgment, my intentions were to just cause minimal property damage to his vehicle and scare him.

I realize that no words or apologies could possibly go back and undo the damage that I have caused. I will spend the rest of my life living with regret for these mistakes. Because I cannot change my past mistakes, I plan to spend the remainder of my incarceration turning this negative experience into a

positive one. During the 3 years I spent in both Federal and State custody for my case, I was able to speak with a Psychiatrist and begin taking medication for the P.T.S.D. symptoms that I believe could have contributed to my unacceptable behavior. Additionally, I volunteered as a G.E.D. tutor and a suicide prevention assistant while detained at M.C.C. Manhattan. I attempted to continue my service in both roles after the B.O.P. moved me to M.D.C. in Brooklyn, but unfortunately they did not have any positions available. I plan on continuing volunteer work when I get to my assigned prison and to eventually go home both physically and mentally stronger than I was when I entered the prison system.

As humans we are all bound to make mistakes throughout our lifetimes. Some mistakes will often be of more or less significance than others. As Americans, our society has been shaped and molded not only by our past mistakes, but also by the adjustments that we make in response to them. Without learning from our past mistakes we would not have the free and democratic society that we have today. We as a people have the power to shape our own destiny. I am confident that I have learned and will continue to learn from my mistakes that have brought me before you.

I would like to thank you for reading this letter and also for any consideration that you may give me in my sentencing.

Richard Laugel


Honorable Paul A. Engelmayer
United States District Judge
Thurgood Marshall
United States Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Honorable Paul A. Engelmayer,

I am writing on the behalf of Richard J Laugel, who is appearing before your court. I am hoping it will help you to see what kind of person Richard is, despite the transgressions that have led to this point.

Richard and I have been in a relationship for three years and married for two, and in that time I have seen many aspects of his personality. I have found him to be extremely good hearted, dependable, outgoing, and well regarded among his friends and military peers.

From the beginning of our relationship Richard has been a dutiful, loving, and encouraging husband to me. Most importantly, has been his commitment to being an outstanding step father to my two children. Richard has cared for their well being, stability and very much involved in their lives as if they were his biological children. They have grown to value, appreciate and love him as a father.

I believe Richard to be an honorable individual, a valuable member to our family, and over all good man. I am confident that as we move forward, he will emerge a better person. I can tell you without a doubt that Richard is incredibly remorseful in making such serious mistakes. I believe in his ability to make a amends to the court. It is my sincere hope the court takes this letter into consideration at the time of sentencing showing some leniency.

Sincerely,

Tania M Jackson- Laugel

Dear Judge Engelmayer,

I have known Richard Laugel since January 2005. I held the position of Platoon Commander and Company Gunnery Sergeant and worked with Richard on a daily basis. Richards military record speaks for itself, he is a war hero. He provided personal security for General Mattis, former United States Secretary of Defense James Mattis, during the initial invasion into Iraq at the start of the war. There is no question that Richard served his country with honor, defended our way of life, and protected his fellow service men and women in the most dangerous place on earth at that time. He has made sacrifices, and experienced loss, that no one else will ever understand except for those who served during that time. Richard was highly regarded by his fellow Marines. After his first deployment to Iraq he served as a key leader in the training, and mentorship of hundreds of young Marines getting ready for their first deployment into combat. Because of his leadership, and experience, Richard was chosen to be part of Military Police Companies Strike Team for our deployment to Fallujah, Iraq in 2005. The Strike Team was responsible for the special training, oversight, planning and execution of missions that were a higher threat than most missions. Richards professionalism and expertise was responsible for saving more lives than can be measured. His personal self-sacrifice and courage was exceptional.

After leaving the Marine Corps with an Honorable Discharge, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. During this period, I kept a close relationship with him and followed his career. I am very close friends still to this day with many [REDACTED] that Richard worked directly with. Richard was well liked, and his funny personality still brings smiles to their faces when they speak of him.

I retired from the Marine Corps as a Sergeant Major in September 2017. I have led and served with thousands of Marines. My last command as SgtMaj of Marine Air Group 41, Det Alpha had just under a thousand Marines that I led. Still to this day I can say that Richard Laugel is one of the best Marines I have ever had. His dedication, and service to his country was impeccable.

I do not believe that a person's military service and PTSD is an excuse for any criminal act. If Richard is guilty of a crime, he should be held accountable for his actions. However, it must be taken into consideration. There is no doubt in my mind that Richard suffers from PTSD, he needs our help. It is very easy for someone who hasn't served in combat to write Richard off. What we should be doing is wrapping our arms around him, help him address his issues that led him to make a poor decision, and help him get back on track. He is a great person with a huge heart that would do anything to help others. He has lived a life of service to his country and community. As a result of his dedicated service he has endured many traumatic events and loss that have caused him to lose his way and make some poor decisions.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Respectfully,


M. Dallas Miller

SgtMaj USMC Ret.

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